

Wake County Natural Areas Inventory

BARHAM GRANITIC FLATROCKS

Site Number: 4

Size: about 30 acres

Site Significance: County

Quadrangle: Rolesville

Ownership: N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, multiple private

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES: This site contains a moderate amount of Granitic Flatrocks. Rare plants include Small's portulaca (*Portulaca smallii*), which is State Threatened, and flatrock pimperl (*Lindernia monticola*), a Watch List species. The presence of titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*) and sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) near and along the Little River at this site is notable; these "Coastal Plain" trees are near the inner edge of their ranges.

LANDSCAPE RELATIONSHIPS: This natural area includes the northern outlier parcel of the Mitchells Mill State Natural Area, but the main part of the State Natural Area lies 1/2-mile to the south. The Little River Aquatic Habitat passes through this site.

SITE DESCRIPTION: This site contains several granitic flatrocks just north of the well-known ones at Mitchells Mill State Natural Area. In fact, a 5.8-acre portion of this site east of the river is State-owned land and is a northern outlier of that State Natural Area. A large flatrock just west of the river, however, is privately owned. Some of the flatrocks are quite pristine with little or no trash, whereas others contain considerable trash and exotic plant invasion. The State Threatened Small's portulaca (*Portulaca smallii*) is present at a few places on the site.

The primary natural community present is Granitic Flatrock. This natural area includes the forest surrounding the actual rock, which is mainly Dry Oak-Hickory Forest natural community. Various lichens and mosses carpet the bare rock, such as *Grimmia*. Deeper soil pockets have hairy-cap moss (*Polystichum* sp.). Species such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), rough buttonweed (*Diodia teres*), and panic grasses (*Panicum* sp.) are common on the soil islands. Around the margins of the islands grow species such as fameflower (*Talinum teretifolium*), Small's portulaca (*Portulaca smallii*), flatrock pimperl (*Lindernia monticola*), and Appalachian sandwort (*Minuartia glabra*). The forest surrounding the outcrops contains species such as Virginia red-cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), winged elm (*Ulmus alata*), mockernut hickory (*Carya alba*), and pines (*Pinus taeda*, *P. virginiana*). A few pools are present on the largest flatrock, and the Little River passes over rocks. Yellow false-foxglove (*Aureolaria flava*) is common at the site in the adjacent woods; and the "Coastal Plain" titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*) and sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) are also found in the natural area.

PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT: A small portion is protected in State ownership as part of Mitchells Mill State Natural Area, and much if not all of the natural area is within the acquisition boundary for the State Natural Area. However, most of the site lies in multiple private, unprotected ownership. In addition to potential State acquisition, Wake County is acquiring land in the Little River corridor for mitigation and park land for the proposed Little